

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) delivered remarks today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in support of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and expressing his "deep disappointment" of the Presidential veto this morning. Congressman Rodriguez delivered the following remarks:

"Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Children's Health Insurance Program and with deep disappointment that the President chose to veto legislation to expand this critical program.

"Today we have more than forty-six million uninsured individuals in this country, six million of whom are under the age of eighteen.

"With the cost of healthcare continuing to rise and becoming out of reach for more and more Americans, the time has come for us to step up and provide access to healthcare for more of our children.

"In my own state of Texas, we have a higher percentage of uninsured individuals than any other state in the nation.

"There are over 1.4 million children in Texas without health insurance, and without CHIP that statistic would be even higher.

"As of February, slightly more than 325,000 Texas children were enrolled in CHIP and that is just a small portion of the uninsured population.

"H.R. 976 would have provided my state with the resources to cover an additional 440,000 children who are already eligible for CHIP.

"That is a significant step forward and I am appalled that the President, who also hails from the state of Texas, would deny these children access to health care.

"Millions of children across this country are eligible for CHIP, but continue to lack health insurance.

"Their parents worry daily about the possibility of minor illnesses leading to expensive emergency care because they don't have access to pediatricians and preventative medicine.

"This legislation would expand the program to reach another 3.8 of these children nationwide.

"At the same time, it will maintain coverage for the 6.6 million children who already rely on the program.

"These children are from working families who simply cannot keep up with rising healthcare costs.

"Health insurance should not be out of reach for American workers and their children.

"I urge my colleagues to vote to override the President's veto and protect our nation's children."

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